

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-17 are pending herein, claim 1 being independent. By the amendment above, claims 1-17 have each been amended, to remove improper multiple dependencies and alternative language therefrom, as required by the Examiner. In addition, reference numerals have been deleted, and other minor clarifying amendments have been made to conform to accepted United States practice, grammar and idiom. No new matter has been added.

In the pending Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 (2d ¶) as allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention. Once this rejection was addressed, the Examiner indicated that claims 1-3 would be allowable. Specifically, the Examiner pointed to certain language in claims 1-3 which offered certain limitations in the alternative, or as “preferred” embodiments. By the amendment above, these alternative and/or “preferred” embodiments have been removed. It is believed that the removal of those “preferred” limitations as indicated by the above amendment does not place the claims within the ambit of the prior art, and so it is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended are allowable.

The Examiner also objected to claims 4-17 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as in improper form, namely multiple dependent claims depending from other multiple dependent claims. By the above amendment, all claims have been rendered singly dependent, and so it is requested that this objection be withdrawn.

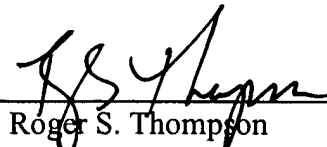
Finally, the Examiner has requested that certain references be submitted in a separate Information Disclosure Statement. Attached is a suitable Information Disclosure Statement, together with the fee required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(c)(2).

There being no further grounds for rejection or objection, early and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

It is believed that no further fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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